

**CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS**

Kimberley Driscoll
Mayor

October 21, 2014

The Honorable Martha Coakley
Attn: Antitrust Division
Office of the Attorney General
One Ashburton Place, 18th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Madam Attorney General:

I am writing to support your settlement with Partners HealthCare, and specifically the proposed mergers with Hallmark Health System and South Shore Hospital. I also applaud you for your commitment to quality and health care cost containment. This agreement is important to the continued good health of our city and to generations of local families who live and work here.

North Shore Medical Center (NSMC) and Partners HealthCare have been vital to Salem and the North Shore for decades. Over the years, they have provided key resources to our city including significant financial and programmatic support for the Salem Family Health Center, and a wide range of local health and community support services.

NSMC is the largest private employer in Salem and families throughout our community rely on it for care and comfort. NSMC also remains the region's only safety net hospital system with government payors representing 67% of its total revenue. Without the support of NSMC and Partners Healthcare, we would be hard pressed to continue to care for the most vulnerable in Salem, Lynn, Peabody, and beyond.

Recently, NSMC and Partners announced plans to reorganize care in our area. These plans include a significant investment in community-based care, where costs are lower, and joining with Hallmark Health System to integrate and expand behavioral health services. These plans demonstrate a continued commitment to Salem and all the municipalities of the North Shore, and more importantly, address the crisis in behavioral health that is challenging cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth.

The agreement before the court will enable NSMC and Partners to continue to serve the families of Salem and the North Shore. Please consider my support and enable this important work to proceed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Driscoll", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Kimberley Driscoll
Mayor
City of Salem